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ABSTRACT

The central thesis of this paper is that the equitable and humane society has a moral obligation to provide is members with developmental assistance in acquiring those transactional competencies necessary for reconciling personal needs with societal expectations and for discovering meaning in their lives through their essential life roles as workers, family members, learners, consumers, citizens, and culture bearers. The author claims that education for today's world must be life-centered and life-long. What is needed is a dynamic relationship between learning and life. The life-centered curriculum must focus on that point where the individual interacts and transacts with the environment. The author recommends the establishment of a competency-based curriculum leading to an associate degree in Life-Centered Education. The units of the curriculum would be built around the essential life roles of individuals in the community. Life-centered education would be concerned with ways that the individual might express his/her individuality and autonomy while making the necessary transactions within pervasive life roles. Methods of curriculum implementation, including selecting the target groups and training community college personnel to act as advisory groups, are included. (DC)

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LIFE-CENTERED EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper on Life-Centered Education has been evolving over a two-year period. Its' evolution is only in the formative stage. Readers are encouraged to make comments, suggest additions or deletions, and to contribute anecdotes that might illustrate a particular point. I am indebted to many people who have already made suggestions. The paper has been presented in various forms at several colleges and conferences in Canada, Florida, New England and the Midwest. Hopefully, the next copy the reader will see will be a revision of this revision - each time more explicit and better illustrated - for this is truly a working paper.

I am particularly indebted to a few colleagues who have influenced my thinking. W. Harold Grant was a real source of inspiration during his years at Michigan State. As a participant in his year-long student development seminar, I was introduced to the work of Jung, Myers-Briggs and Van der Hoop and most of all to the insights of Dr. Grant. Professor Russell Kleis has made many helpful suggestions for resource materials and has influenced my view that adult education is essentially a life-centered endeavor. Dr. Keith Goldhammer's writing on Career Education has been extremely helpful. His emphasis on the significance of life roles reinforced my earlier, (but sometimes forgotten) graduate work in sociology and anthropology. Also his applications of Dewey's philosophy have been most helpful. Finally, and most recently, the voluminous review of literature by a new colleague, Dr. John Stewart, in his intensive study of values education has been extremely beneficial. Dr. Stewart has made me conscious of the usefulness of the Getzels paradigm and also the need to seek solid roots in the transactional theory of Dewey.

Max R. Raines
Professor of
Higher Education

LIFE-CENTERED EDUCATION: SOME EVOLVING THOUGHTS

Max R. Raines
Michigan State University

Current literature in higher education reflects a period of unprecedented innovation. During the past decade, one can chart the changes in the field through a series of "vintage" words which have served as the themes of national conventions. During the first portion of the social revolution, mounting pressure from disenfranchised groups produced such "demand" phrases as "equal opportunity", "relevance", and "viability" of programs. More recently, those "demand" phrases have been replaced by themes that reflect a variety of responses: "new constituencies", "non-traditional studies", "open universities", "external degrees", "community-based education", etc. Each year some phrases are retired to the "cellar" - more to recover from overuse than to mellow. Anyone who would use them for several years risks the label of "not being with it".

Educational historians will have to determine whether this has been a period of true educational reformation or simply a "reformation by rhetoric". There can be no doubt that several critical elements in post-secondary learning systems are being substantially modified, at least in some institutions.

Figure I illustrates the major components of a learning system and suggests that there is a dynamic interaction among these elements. A learning system is a Gestalt and Gestalt interaction has a way of producing unexpected results.

(CHART I ABOUT HERE)

What is to be learned? ------- Content
Why is it to be learned? ------ Rationale
Who is to learn it? ---------- Clientele
How is it to be learned? ------ Methodology
Where is it to be learned? ---- Setting

Most of the current innovations have addressed the elements of clientele, methodology, and setting more than the elements of content and rationale. Yet it is almost inevitable that major changes in conceptualization of clienteles, methodologies and settings will ultimately cause substantial modification in content and rationale. For example, the emergence of competency/performance based methodology has profound implications for potential changes in content. If one alters the emphasis on acquisition of knowledge to an emphasis upon use of the knowledge as in a competency model, the focus of content will be altered markedly. Or if one establishes a dynamic interactive relationship with "non-traditional" constituencies, those "new" learners may challenge the content by asking questions which force some change in focus of the content. In that case, the focus becomes more oriented toward life itself - the life that is being lived or might be lived.

Because the complexities of life have increased so much and because the changes in life are so rapid, it is not surprising that the desire for an education focused on life itself has intensified. Education for today's world is simply not adequate for the majority of people unless that education is life centered and lifelong.

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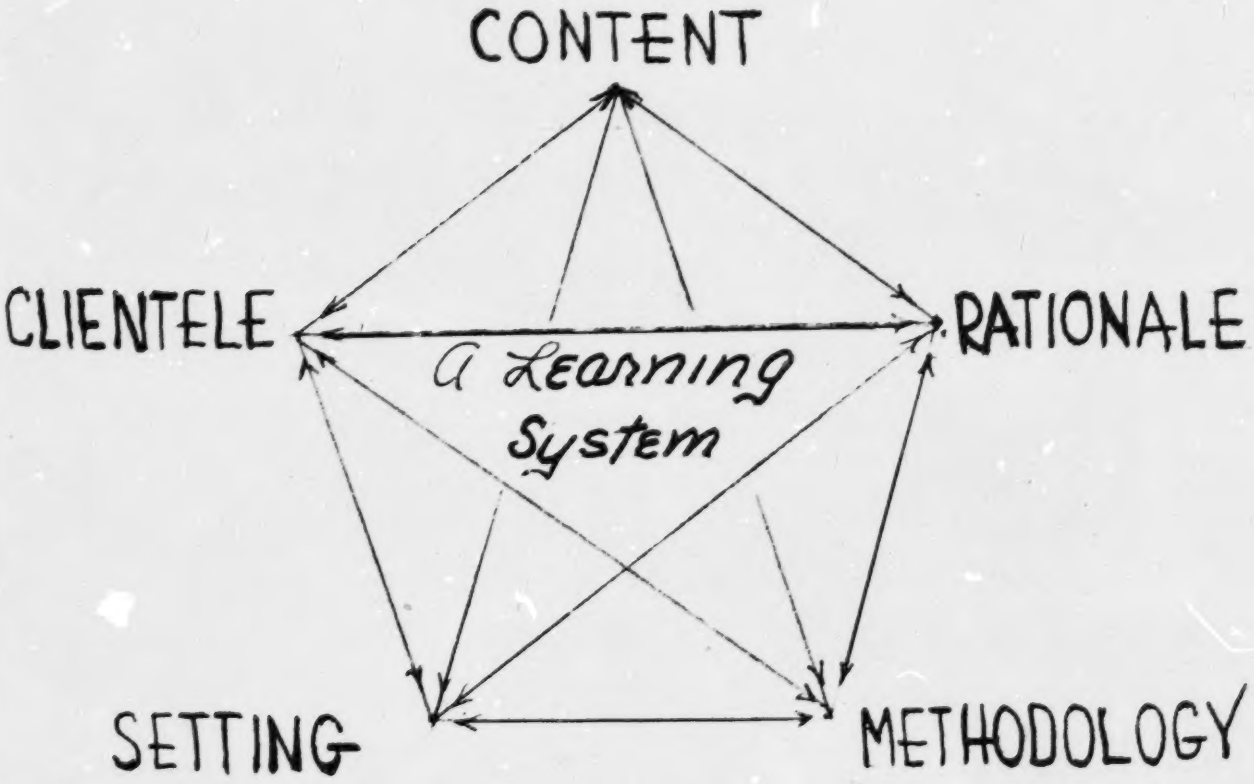
CHART I



Perhaps this need for a dynamic relationship between learning and life accounts for the resurgent interest in John Dewey's work. Twenty years ago, many educators were rejecting Dewey's philosophy because of misapplication of his concepts in some ill-conceived "progressive" school systems. When the Russians launched Sputnik and our national pride was wounded, we heard many shouts from traditionalists of "We told you so!" Life adjustment education came under particular fire. But today the writings of Dewey have new significance particularly for postsecondary education. Dewey (1916) maintained that the critical locus of education should be at that point where the individual interacts (or transacts) with his environment. He emphasized the importance of direct experience in the learning process and he maintained the phenomenological position that the learner's perception of reality <u>is</u> his reality. Dewey's perceptual emphasis reinforced the need for direct experience as a primary basis for changing perceptions of the learner. No philosopher has argued so persuasively for community-based and life-centered education. Because man and society are in a continual state of change, Dewey chose the word "progressive" education to emphasize that its content and method must be continually adapted to new needs and new problems. He was concerned that we acquire skills for learning: (a) careful delineation of problems, (b) identification of relevant data sources, (c) development of alternative solutions, and (d) pragmatic testing of tentative solutions.

Keith Goldhammer, (1972) one of the current protagonists for Dewey's philosophy, has maintained the importance of education focused on life roles. Writing primarily in the context of elementary and secondary education, Goldhammer is urging a return to Dewey's principles through an expanded version of vocational education.

> If the central mission of the school is to assist all students to become so capacitated that they perform their life responsibilities competently, then there need be no false distinctions between various curricula within the school. All human beings are involved in career activities; all human beings must develop the competence, the skills, the personal understandings and the knowledges essential for performance of their roles, to serve the interests both of their fellowmen and themselves. The concept of the careers curriculum involves a centrality of concern for the range of life careers in which the individual will engage. (page 124)

Throughout his writings Goldhammer emphasizes the importance of "capacitating" students for successful performance of life roles and he identifies five major roles of the individual in our society.

1. A producer of goods or a renderer of services
2. A member of a family group
3. A participant in social and political life
4. A participant in avocational pursuits
5. A participant in the regulatory functions involved in aesthetic, moral and religious concerns (page 129)

It is his position that each of these areas can be considered a career area in which basic competencies must be attained; consequently he argues for a careers curriculum.

Goldhammer's proposals speak well for life-centered education. His identification with the term Careers Education while logically explicated, will pose problems for postsecondary institutions. The difficulties, particularly in community college settings, stems from two sources. First the continuing resistance of liberal arts and transfer faculty members to occupational education in most any form and secondly, the tendency of vocational and technical educators to accept the state and federal career education funds without accepting the broader meaning proposed by authorities such as Goldhammer. While no term will be acceptable to all, it seems to me that the concept of Life-centered Education is more apt to build a bridge between the two divisions than the term Careers Education.

The chief limitation of the term Life-centered Education may be in its presumed association with the Life Adjustment Movement of the early 1950's. The latter term reflected the normative pre-occupation of that era which saw "maladjustment" as the greatest sin. Through the revolution of the 1960's, we discovered our preoccupation with normalacy at the expense of the unique qualities and potentialities of the individual. Today Life-centered Education would be concerned with ways that the individual might express her/his individuality and autonomy while making the necessary transactions within pervasive life roles.

Rationale for Life-Centered Education

The new learning systems are exciting, but I think we realize that they are not necessarily so new. Look for a moment at the Antecedents Diagram.

(CHART II HERE)

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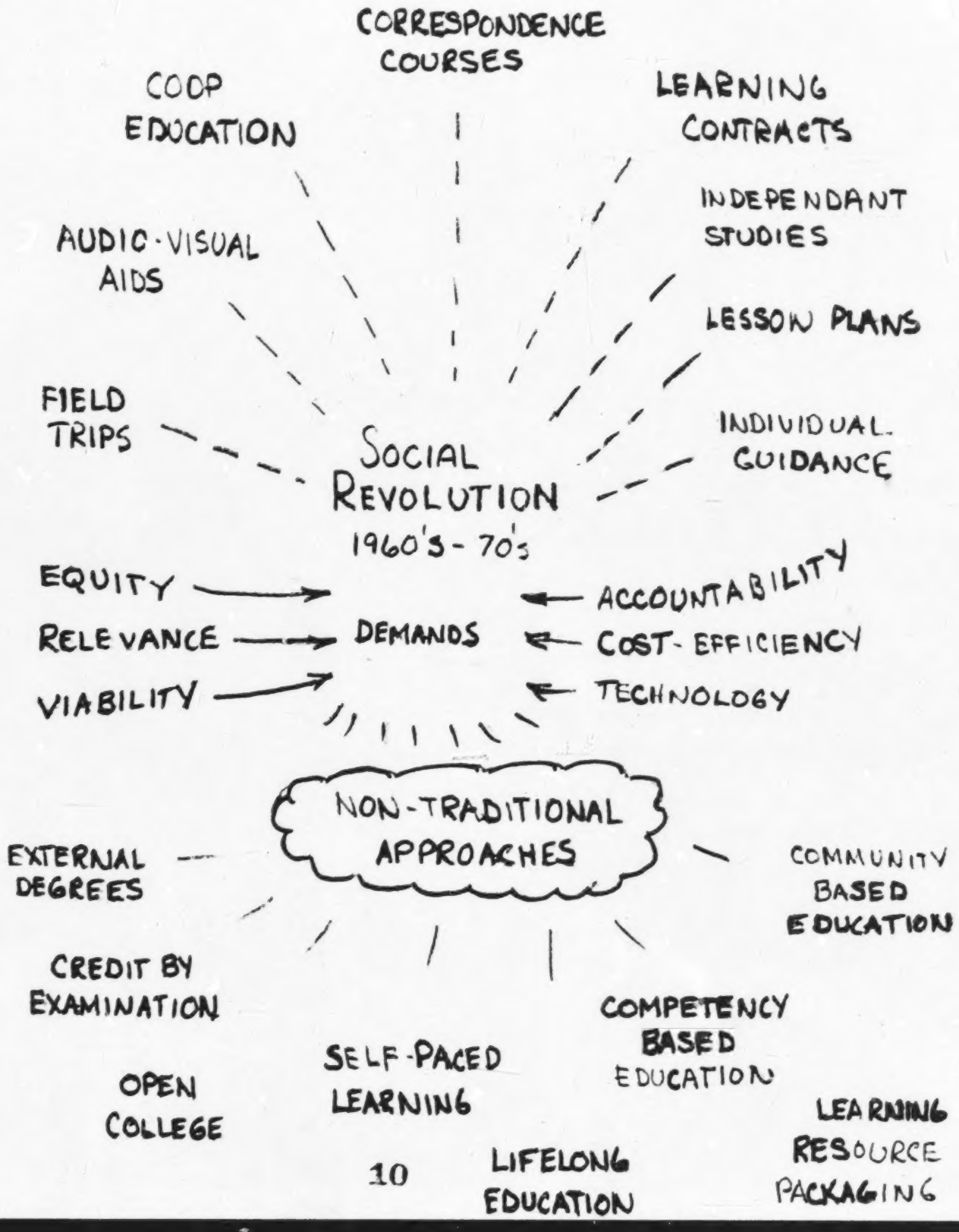
CHART II

Antecedents to Non-Traditional Studies



One can immediately see the relationships between antecedents and the new forms of education. I do not think we should be disturbed, however, that the response to the social revolution is not as original as we sometimes like to believe. Instead, we should focus on the fact that we are responding and those responses reveal greater flexibility, greater egalitarian commitment and greater individualization in higher education. While I am most pleased with those responses, I want to center the remainder of my lecture on content and rationale in higher education.

When one examines the various philosophies throughout the history of higher education, it is apparent that they have held a common focus on "man's need for knowledge". What kind of knowledge, who is to acquire it, and how it is to be acquired have been central issues. At the risk of some distortion through over-simplifications, I have constructed a "globe of higher education" to illustrate the variations in emphasis on content and rationale.

(CHART III HERE)

You will note that the globe revolves around man's need for knowledge. It also has two hemispheres. The right hemisphere emphasizes conceptualization of knowledge and the left hemisphere stresses utilization of knowledge. Argumentation over this issue has permeated the history of higher education. Alfred North Whitehead maintained that the debate over this issue is unproductive.

> "The anthithesis between a technical education and a liberal education is fallacious. There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical: that is, no education which does not impart both techniques and intellectual vision. In simpler language, education should turn out the pupil with something he knows well and something he can do well." (page 58, Whitehead, Alfred North, The Aims of Education, Mentor Book Company, 1949.)

CHART III

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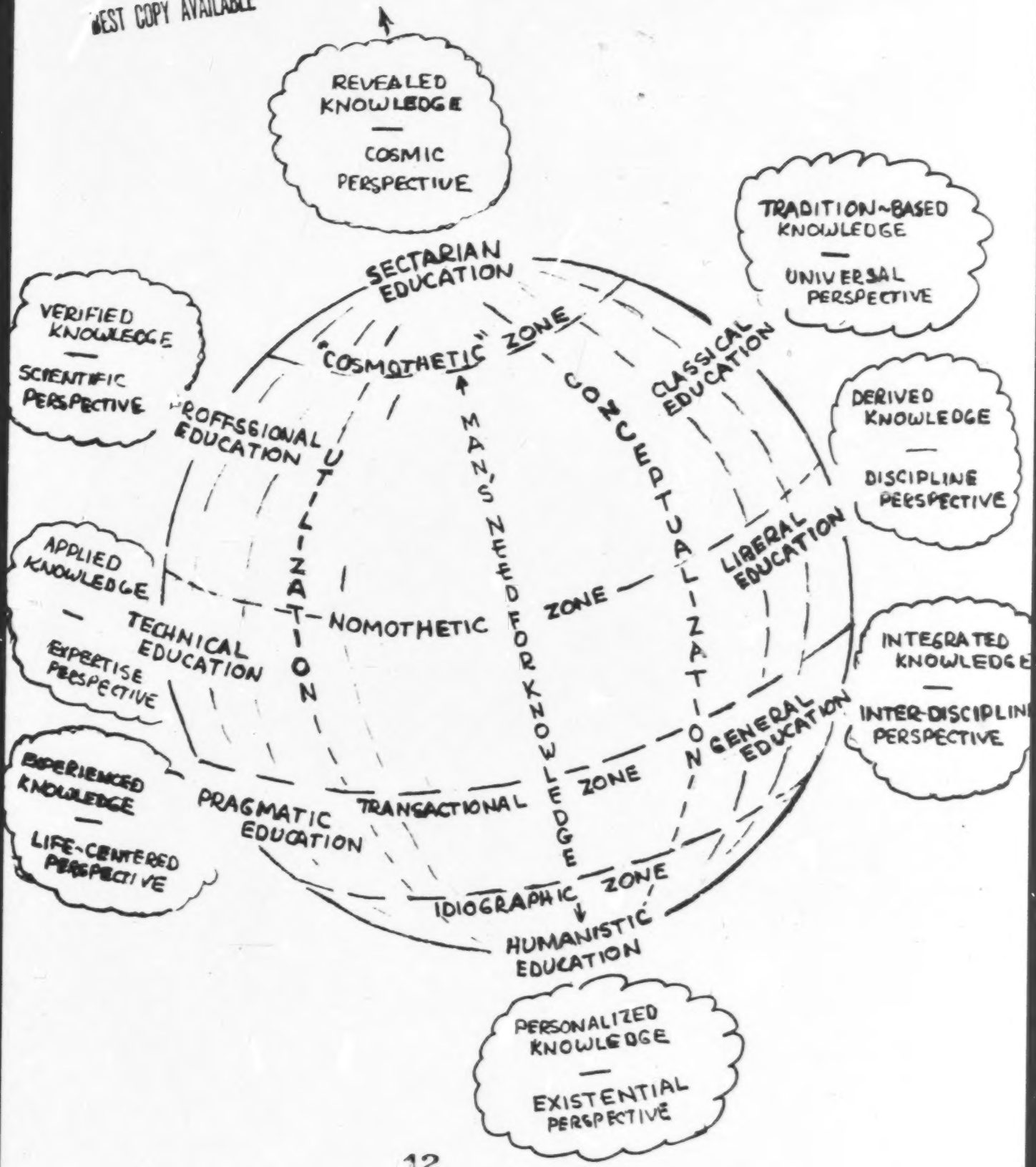

His statement is profound and pointed, but it has not quelled the argument one whit. Today we all know the tension which often exists between the liberal arts transfer division and the two-year technical division in community colleges. Now let's look at some of the prevailing perspectives on knowledge in higher education.

At this point, I have drawn on the work of Getzels and associates. For the past 25 years, Getzels has written about the nomothetic, idiographic and transactional dimensions of the socialization process. For this presentation, I have added a fourth dimension which I call "cosmothetic" (not to be confused with "cosmetic", I hope). In higher education, the cosmothetic perspective is rooted in the faith that a Supreme Being has revealed absolute truth to man through inspired scriptures: Old Testament, New Testament, Koran, Vedas, Bagavad Gita, etc. Man, therefore, should find his ultimate destiny through discovery of these truths in his own nature and in his relationships with others. There is no need in the cosmothetic perspective to search for truth. It is there. The task is to find illustrations and manifestations that will convince others that the truth is available to all believers. Since the truth is known, one must accept its authenticity and ultimate authority in governing his/her life. Also, those who are closest to the truth become authorities who should be listened to. According to this view, man's nature is essentially sinful and can be transformed only by a process of rebirth or by continuing exposure to the ultimate Being.

The nomothetic norm has a cultural base rather than a cosmic one. In this perspective there is a belief in the ultimate value of knowledge --

particularly wisdom. It is further maintained that the value of knowledge is to be judged either by its persistence through time (tradition) or by scientific validation. Knowledge is also normative and these cultural norms provide man with the basis for evaluating life experiences and for governing his behavior. The nomothetic perspective is also authoritarian in nature, but not so much so as the cosmothetic perspective. The educated man or woman in this context will acquire an understanding of the "collective" wisdom and then make his/her own applications of the "truth". Also imbedded in this view is the assumption that man is inherently destructive. Society, therefore, must see that man is properly socialized.

The idiographic position is centered in the needs, perceptions, feelings, and experiences of the individual with a belief in his innate and ultimate goodness. Only the individual can be accepted as the authority for his/her own life. The only reality exists in the individual's perceptions of reality. By releasing the potential capacities of the individual, a society will be created which is capable of fulfilling individual needs and aspirations. It will, therefore, be a flexible open society which accommodates the human potential.

The transactional perspective is not antagonistic to the humanistic view of idiographic thinking, but it questions that man can be judged as either essentially bad or essentially good. Transactionalists would insist that man has the potential for being good or bad. Man is most apt to fulfill his potential for goodness if he is able to reconcile his own personal needs with the expectations of society in a manner that is mutually beneficial. Knowledge is not valued for its own sake, but rather as a means for making satisfactory transactions with the environment. Now let us see how this translates itself when we place various approaches to higher education on our globe.

If you are a strong believer in the absolute truths revealed to man by God, you might be most comfortable in a sectarian college. If you are a believer in the traditional and inherent value of time-tested knowledge, you would find comfort in classical education. If your emphasis is on the disciplined search for new knowledge, you will find philosophical support in liberal education. If you are bothered by theory without application, you may be more comfortable in the utilization hemisphere where technical skills or professional knowledge are used to create a more productive society.

If you are bothered by the heavy emphasis upon cultural norms which seem to imply that "man was created to serve institutions rather than institutions were created to serve man", you will probably have your feet entrenched in the humanistic and existential movement within higher education.

If you believe that knowledge must be processed through individual experience in order to have meaning and if you believe that the needs of society and the needs of man can be and should be reconciled, you are probably concerned with a more pragmatic and life-centered emphasis which one finds in some forms of general education and also in the broadest version of career education (Goldhammer and Taylor, 1972) which sees each of the basic life roles as a career whether it be family member, consumer, citizen, worker, student or culture bearer. In practical application, these positions are not absolute in nature; consequently, one can approach them as being on a continuum. Hence, you could probably locate a place somewhere on this globe which might represent your view of education. If time permitted, I could ask each member of the audience to place a pin on the globe and thus stake out some territory. I suspect that we would find pins all over the globe.

As your speaker, I have the opportunity to tell you where my pin is located on the globe. In this way, you can know where I am coming from. This allows you to turn me off (if you haven't already) or to question my views, or to say "ri .t on". I am in the transactional zone at this time, a bit left of center. For me, this is the proper context for an education that is life centered and lifelong. I grew up in the cosmothetic zone - went to college in the liberal section - moved to the humanistic position for awhile and then wound up in the transactional zone. My current assignment is in professional education as a member of the graduate faculty in the College of Education. In this context, you might say I have been a philosophical "globe trotter".

Let's turn Getzel's paradigm into a two-dimensional circle.

(CHART IV HERE)

The inner circle represents the individual or idiographic area. Here I have used concentric circles to illustrate various dimensions of personality. I have encompassed the individual being in a circle of basic needs. Were space to permit, I would have included Maslow's hierarchy. Instead, I chose Robert Ardrey's list of three: security, stimulation and identity. While Ardrey and Abraham Maslow seem to reverse the order of priority of needs, their observations are not incompatible if one analyzes the underlying concepts they are expressing.

It seems to me that Maslow's needs for "safety, belonging and love" are closely related to Ardrey's "security" needs. The needs for "self-esteem" identified by Maslow appear similar to Ardrey's need for "identity". Since most of Ardrey's observations were drawn from studies of animal behavior, it is not surprising that the need for "self-actualization" is not included.

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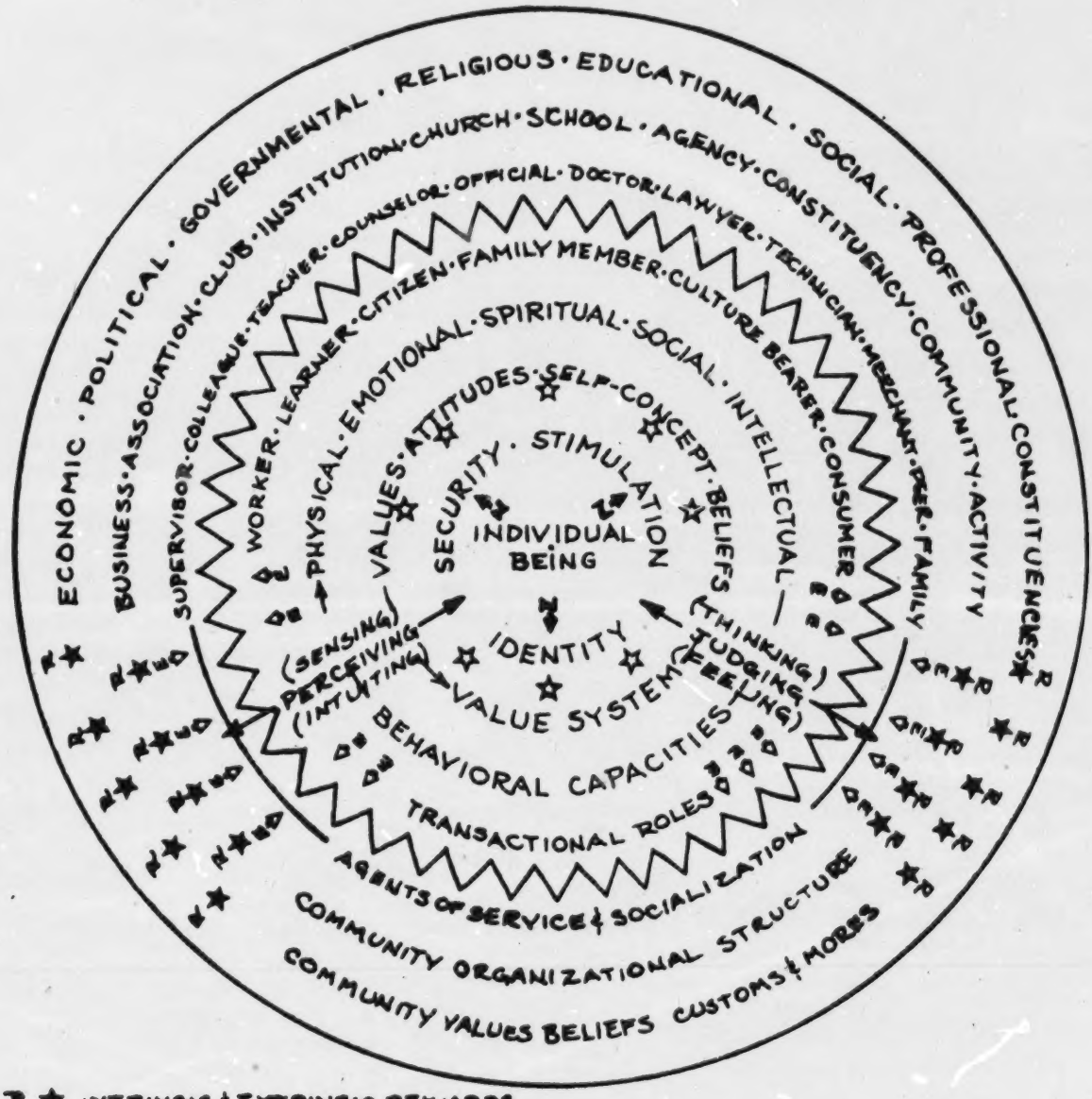
CHART ~ IV

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LIFE-CENTERED EDUCATION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WORKER · LEARNER · CITIZEN · FAMILY MEMBER · CULTURE BEARER · CONSUMER
PHYSICAL · EMOTIONAL · SPIRITUAL · SOCIAL · INTELLECTUAL
VALUES · ATTITUDES · SELF-CONCEPT · BELIEFS
SECURITY · STIMULATION
INDIVIDUAL BEING
IDENTITY
VALUE SYSTEM
(SENSING) PERCEIVING (INTUITING)
(THINKING) JUDGING (FEELING)
BEHAVIORAL CAPACITIES
TRANSACTIONAL ROLES
AGENTS OF SERVICE & SOCIALIZATION
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
COMMUNITY VALUES BELIEFS CUSTOMS & MORES

R ★ INTRINSIC & EXTRINSIC REWARDS
E ▷ IMPLICIT & EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS
N ◆ INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

MAX RAINES - 1974

At the same time, it would appear that a combined need for stimulation and identity is a growth force and therefore the potential source of the distinctly human need for self-actualization.

Value System. Through the encounter with significant others, the individual acquires a set of values, attitudes and beliefs along with a concept of the self. The circle of this chart is inadequate for representing the complexity of this process. If one were to imagine that the value system were on a plane just below the surface of this circle, it might be more appropriately represented as that place in the personality structure which "catches" and absorbs the residual and pervasive judgments of the individual regarding what is good, bad, desirable, undesirable, etc., about others, about ideas, and about self. These judgments come in part from direct experience, but more often they are derived from internalization of the views of significant others through the socialization process. In fact, some of the most difficult moments for the individual in the transactional process occur when her/his values derived from direct and personal experience (idiographic) conflict with the conventional values adopted from others in the nomothetic realm.

Also filtering down from the transactional experiences with the environment are judgments regarding one's own worthiness as a person. This concept of self is that part of the value system which is directed inward to the self. It is a potent force in shaping the confidence level of the individual for performing a variety of transactions which are necessary to self-maintenance and self-enhancement.

Behavioral Capacities. All of these needs and behavioral processes take place within the context of the individual capacities the person possesses.

For example, if a person is handicapped physically or impaired emotionally, the number of potential responses to the environment may be limited. Some individuals through inherent or acquired attributes may be particularly gifted in one or more of these capacities and thus experience a great number of choices. Combinations of these capacities are frequently expressed in a variety of psychological constructs such as aptitudes, abilities, temperament, etc.

Transactional Roles. As the individual interacts with the people, things and ideas in the environment, she/he will assume a set of pervasive life roles as a security and economy measure. By "playing the odds", one learns which behaviors are most apt to earn perceived rewards. To receive tangible or intangible rewards, the individual must meet implicit and explicit expectations within the environment.

The phenomena of role taking is less complicated in a non-complex society where it occurs largely by "doing what comes naturally". In such societies, there is a limited amount of ambiguity in the expectations. The potential rewards are fewer in number and usually more tangible in nature. As I mentioned earlier, the individual in a non-complex society learns to be a tribesman, kinsman, barterer, culture bearer, or warrior in the natural context of life. In Dewey's words, the person "learns by doing". There are adequate role models who provide consistent reinforcement in the learning process, thus the developmental process is relatively free from conflicting expectations. Transactions are relatively simple and seem to operate on a "you-will-get-this-if-you-do-this" basis.

Such is not the case in modern society. The outer ring of the circle illustrates many of the environments in the nomothetic phase of life. There

are conflicting expectations within and among these environments. The rewards are not always what they seem. Consequently, in a modern technological society, a consumer, for example, needs much reassurance from advertising that "you can be sure if it's Westinghouse". Preparation for the pervasive life roles is extended over a prolonged childhood which often deprives the child of direct experience, consequently, the child spends many years in the games of "playlike" or "pretend". The school system assumes that the life roles will be learned through the natural process of living and typically seeks to give the child increasing doses of subject matter -- leaving it to the child to make the appropriate applications.

The essential unity of life and learning reflected in non-complex societies has been recognized by many educational philosophers. Whitehead, whom I mentioned earlier, makes this pungent observation: "There is only one subject matter for education and that is Life in all of its manifestations. Instead of this single unity we offer (students) Algebra from which nothing follows; History from which nothing follows; a Couple of Languages never mastered...." He continues "Can such a list be said to represent Life as it is known in the midst of living it? The least that can be said of it is that it is a rapid table of contents which a diety might run over in his mind while he was thinking of creating a world, and had not yet determined how to put it together." (end of quote)

Now as we look at the nomothetic domain, we get some picture of the various societal agents who have societal roles to play. The fact that they are also individuals with idiosyncratic needs accounts for the frequent disparity between anticipated roles and actual behavior. This problem creates many barriers in communication and contaminates the transactional process.

Each societal agent has a referrent group or institution or agency which conditions and reinforces the values, customs, mores of society. These values are derived from the various segments of the culture (educational, political, economic, religions, etc.) through which man seeks some order in relationships. So much for the nomothetic domain and now a brief look at the dynamics which put these concepts into action.

Here we see potential rewards that are both extrinsic and intrinsic, implied and stated. Here the individual needs are processed through the value system and behavioral capacities which condition both the perceptions and judgment of the individual. As the person moves toward a reward, he/she will encounter explicit or implicit expectations which must be met to attain the rewards that are sought.

All of this time, the processes of perceiving and judging are in operation. The arrows indicate that this message system is directed externally and internally. You all remember the pioneer work of Carl Jung from which this concept of extroversion and introversion is drawn. Some of you who have taken the Myers-Briggs Inventory have already identified which of the perceiving processes you use most consistently (sensing or intuiting) and which of the judging processes (thinking or feeling) you rely on in making sense out of the messages. For those of you who haven't gone through that exercise, I will pause long enough to observe that if all this sounds too theoretical, you are probably using your sensing function which is practical and direct. Those of you who emphasize intuition have probably been fantasizing in all kinds of directions about ways of relating these concepts to your favorite theories. Those of you who emphasize thinking in making judgments have been watching me closely to see if the presentation is sufficiently logical to

warrant further attention. The people who have been using feeling to evaluate what has been said thus far are very aware of their own values and moral precepts. If I have stepped on any of those values, I will have aggravated a need to reaffirm loyalty to those established values. Also, those who are feeling their way through this lecture are very sensitive to the reactions of others in the audience. If they have felt some boredom or restlessness and if they are identified with the speaker as a person, they may be feeling discomfort.

Now I want to turn to the central thesis of this paper.

> Central Thesis
>
> The equitable and humane society has a moral obligation to provide its members with developmental assistance in acquiring those transactional competencies necessary for
>
> (a) reconciling personal needs with societal expectations, and
>
> (b) discovering meaning in their lives through their essential life roles.

Perhaps I should take a moment to elaborate and defend that thesis. There is no doubt that our society has many problems. It contains certain elements of violence, bigotry, false pride, ruthless competitiveness and political corruption, but through it all runs an intention - an ethos that seeks equity and humaneness. All it takes to appreciate that ethos is to live in a country where it does not exist. But, if that ethos is to express itself in our lives, if it is to be experienced, we must find ways of translating the ethos into reality. We have consistently viewed our educational

system as a major mechanism for that translation - yet we know too well how it fails to do so. Acquisition of knowledge becomes more important than the meaning of that knowledge in our lives; what is taught becomes more important than what is learned; what is not learned too often produces negative self-evaluations. The student serves the school system more often than the school system serves the student. I do not expect that to change in my lifetime, but I do believe that a life-centered curriculum for adults can serve to offset some of those negative outcomes. If that is to happen, we must make certain that the life-centered curriculum will keep its focus on that point where the individual interacts and transacts with the environment. By developing competencies in life transactions, the individual can reconcile personal needs with societal expectations. The distance between the acribed roles of society and the idiographic needs of the individual can be reduced. The individual can learn how to have an impact on his or her environment. When the person feels inadequate to the task of role fulfillment, he or she will experience a sense of frustration, self-doubt and ultimately a loss of self-confidence. These negative self-evaluations produce a debilitating stress which is reflected in a wide variety of social problems: mental and physical breakdowns, crime, alcoholism, and drug abuse, etc. In less extreme situations, it produces people who are always spectators and never participants, who are persistently "glued to the tube with a six-pack" and who have seldom glimpsed their potential as growing, developing human beings.

Let's examine for a moment some of the kinds of transactions people need and deserve help with in a life-centered curriculum.

I'll pause while you reflect on these potential areas for development.

(CHART V HERE)

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CHART V

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR TRANSACTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

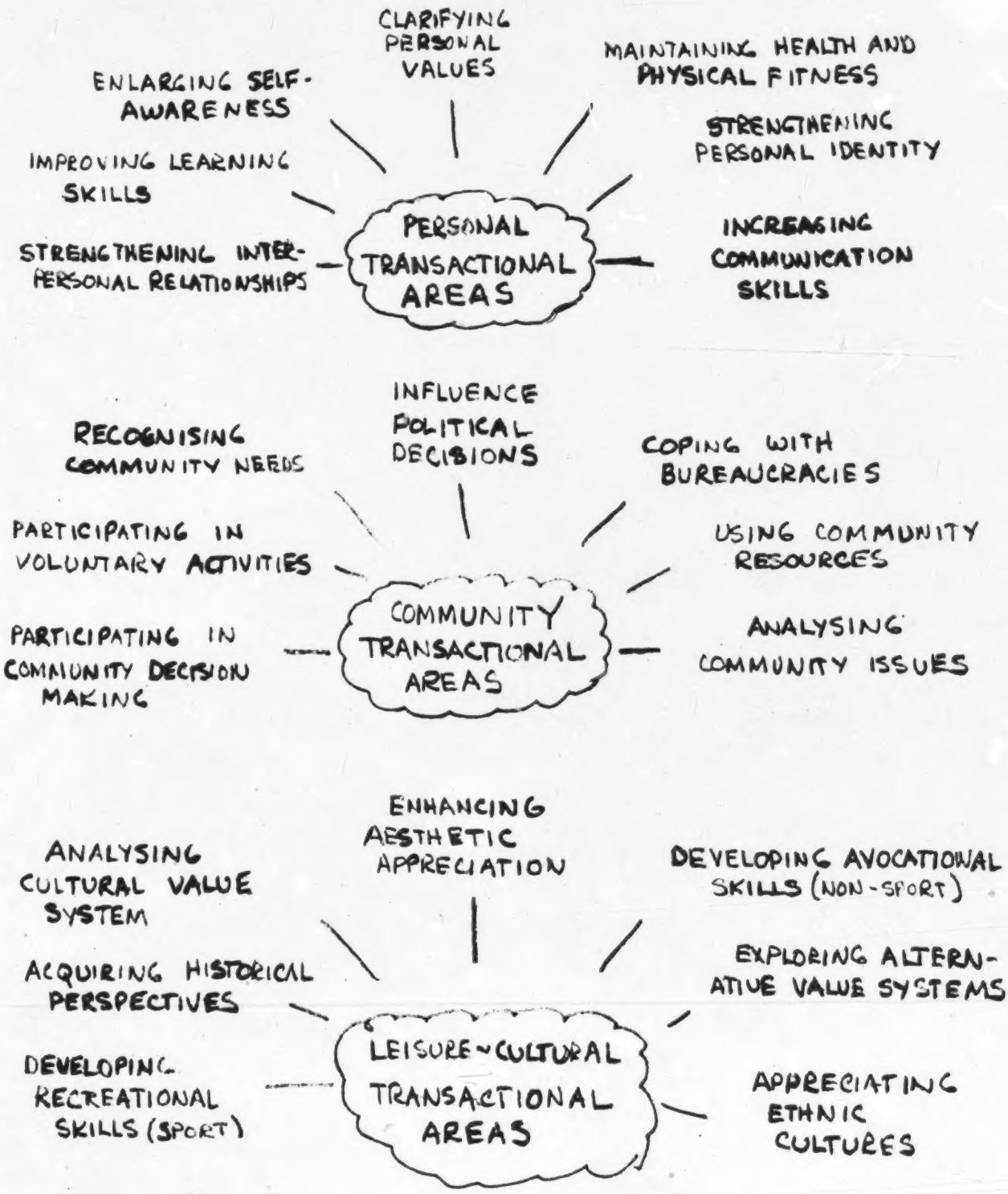

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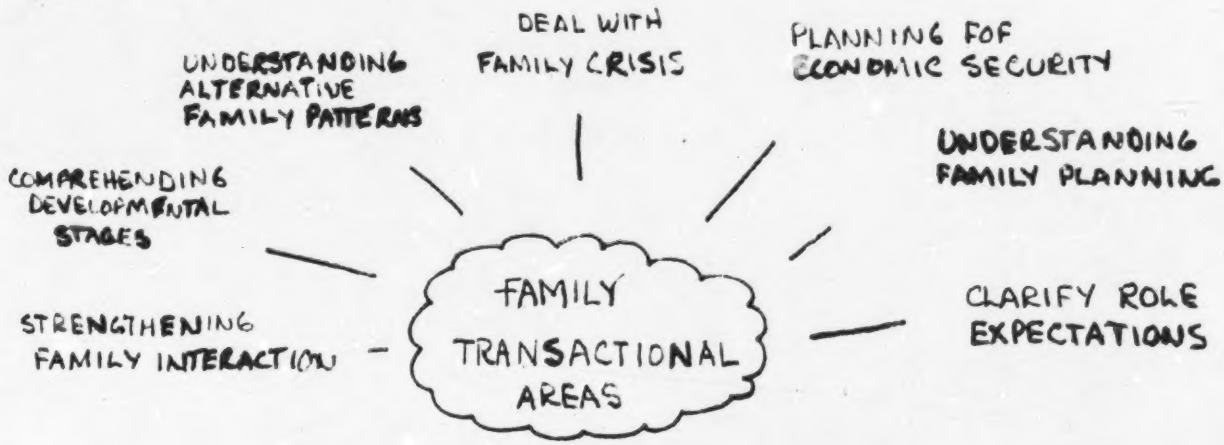
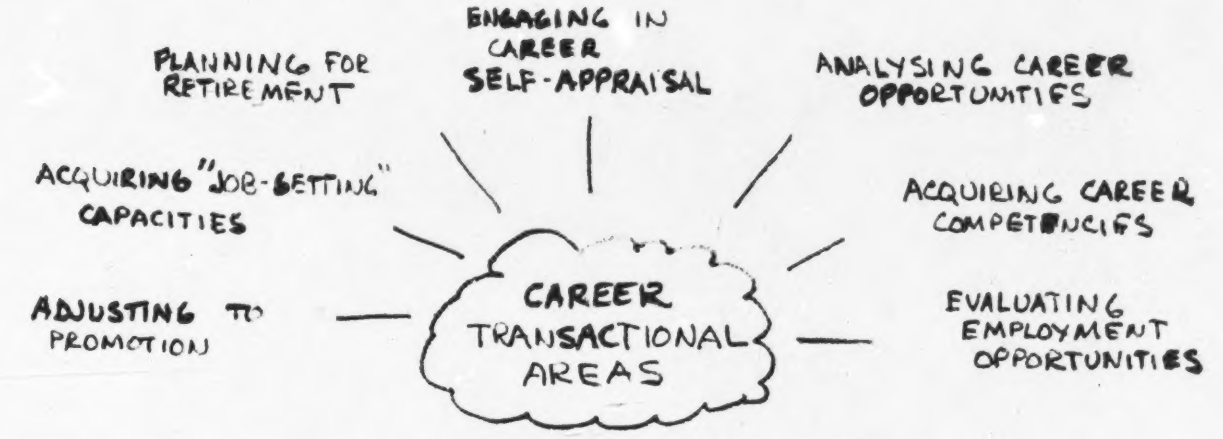
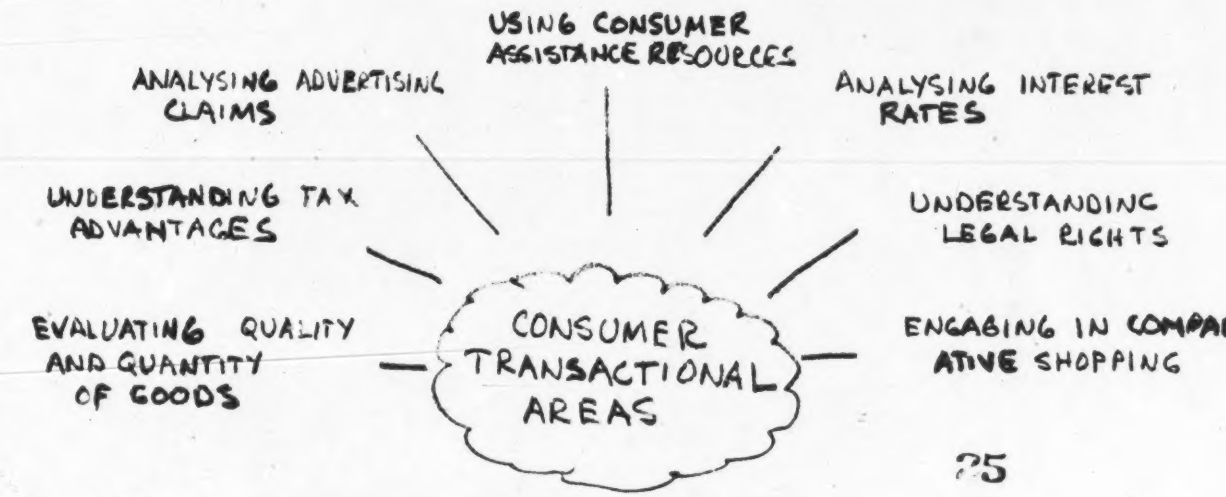
CHART V (CONTINUED)







I believe we have the skills and the commitment to establish a competency-based curriculum leading to an associates degree in Life-Centered Education. I believe that through individualization such a curriculum would appeal to people from all walks of life and all levels of education. I believe that the units of the curriculum could be built around the essential life roles of individuals in the community. I believe that the open college concept which draws upon the existing resources of the college and the community would provide the necessary flexibility for appropriate individualization. I believe that the concept of transactional competencies would give the necessary concreteness and life-centered focus to encourage discovery of greater meaning in life. I believe that cooperative development of a life-centered curriculum would provide the faculty with a continuing opportunity for self-revitalization that is now missing in most colleges. I believe there would be wide support in the community for Life-Centered Education. I believe the cry for accountability comes from citizens and legislators who are in part disillusioned with an education that seems so unrelated to the life that is being lived.

Let me take a few moments to explicate what I mean by transactional competencies. I think a few illustrations may be of value. We make transactions with all sorts of things whether they be animate or inanimate. In a sense, a transaction is the investment of self in experience while attempting to satisfy personal needs. It is giving an object or an idea or a place or a person an opportunity to have impact upon us. Think for a moment of the sculptor who seeks to create a form from a solid object. Most people would say that the stone cannot communicate, but any sculptor will tell you that it does. The sculptor starts with an image or concept. With various instruments, he or

she starts the process of removing pieces of stone to find the form that is potentially there. The stone offers resistance, it also reflects light; it has certain properties or characteristics in its hardness and its light reflection. Its tendencies to yield or not yield, reflect or not reflect, have an impact on the sculptor. In the process, the form may change slightly from the original intention. The free flow of communication between the stone and the sculptor may move toward a sense of unity. The creative sculptor will sense this unity in a deep and profound way. It becomes the essence of an aesthetic and creative experience. In the transaction, the sculptor finds meaning, unity and a greater sense of being.

But, you say, such an experience is limited to a few with creative talent. Not so. Recently we acquired a home with a swimming pool. The first year I decided to have the pool serviced by a service company. I was pleased to have a pool in which to swim daily laps or to use as a place for social gatherings when friends drop by. But there was a minimum of transaction with the whole system of the pool. This year, I decided to take care of it myself. What a change in my perception of the pool. There were problems - I couldn't get the filter system to work properly; I couldn't get the chemicals to produce the crystal water which is so attractive; I couldn't figure out why I was getting air bubbles from the inlets - I reached the point of exasperation. A friend who understood the system agreed to help me and the pool took on greater meaning. I began to understand how it works - the interrelationship of various elements in the system. I'm still struggling with the filter system having taken it apart twice. But, now through the investment of myself in that pool, it is even more than a place for physical workouts or social interactions. Through my transaction with the pool, I am learning something

of its essence - the dynamic interrelationship of its parts. That pool is becoming mine in the real sense of the word. I am feeling better about myself through my increasing sense of participation in my environment. It has become a transactional experience that is enriching my life.

Transactions are a continuing part of life - all aspects of life. Through them one can find meaning, particularly if sensitized to the meaning that is there.

If we were to talk with a wide range of people about their lives, they could identify a wide range of external and internal barriers which prevent them from finding greater meaning in life. Many of these barriers would fall within their life roles as workers, family members, learners, consumers, citizens, culture bearers. These barriers once identified can be translated into related transactional needs. By analyzing these transactional needs, the associated knowledge skills and values can be identified. Let's assume for instance that a group of senior citizens is having difficulty with dealing with inflation on a fixed income. Let's further assume that this difficulty is most acutely experienced at the supermarket. If you were to send five different senior citizens to a supermarket with thirty dollars, you would find much difference in the contents of their baskets at the cashier's counter. The quality and quantity of goods would vary considerably. Also, the aesthetic appeal of their choices would vary. In the filling of the basket, they have gone through a transactional process. To the store they have taken their long-term values about what is "good food"; they have taken their relative levels of trust in television commercials and personalities; they have taken their physical characteristics and peculiar appetites; they have taken their varying capacities to use arithmetic to assess quantity. For some of them, shopping

is a burden, for others, it is a social opportunity, for still others, it is a bitter experience at not having sufficient resources to buy the food they were once accustomed to. For many, the supermarket encountered could be a more productive and rewarding experience than it is. The supermarket transactions can be learned; nutrition can be learned, self-control can be learned; the possibility of cooperative buying can be considered. This is one form of Life-Centered Education. This is not new. Consumerhood is being taught many places to many kinds of people. If there are any differences in what I am advocating, it is to overcome the detached nature of learning and search for those elements of learning that can enhance our transactions by giving them more meaning in our lives.

Implementing a Life-Centered Curriculum

Selecting Target Groups. The first step in implementing a life-centered curriculum would be to identify those clusters of people in the community who share common life styles and life situations. After reviewing the potential range of such clusters, it would be important in the initial stages to select those clusters who have the greatest need and are most apt to respond to an opportunity for Life-Centered Education. This will probably vary from community to community. (CHART VI HERE)

Advisory Group Formation. Once a target group has been identified, it would be important to select representatives of that group to serve in an advisory capacity. To that group of advisors should be added representatives from community agencies who work most directly with that group. The main function of the advisory group would be to participate in a process of need

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CHART ~ VI

Potential Target Groups for Life-CENTERED Education

- SENIOR CITIZENS
- ETHNIC MINORITIES
- LOW INCOME GROUPS
- HANDICAPPED PERSONS
- INCARCERATED PERSONS
- HOUSEWIVES
- BUSINESS - PROFESSIONAL PERSONS
- SCHOOL DROP-OUTS
- FACULTY MEMBERS
- AGENCY PERSONNEL
- GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
- CHURCH LEADERS
- LABOR UNIONS

identification. Instead of relying on that group to define the needs of the target group, I would give them training in the Nominal Group Process which is a modified delphi technique for working with groups of people in a limited time span. I have used this technique with good results and it is a technique that could be taught to lay advisory members in a short period of time. It is currently being used in a wide variety of situations - including industry. It was well described in the American Journal of Public Health in February 1972 and was prepared by Van de Ven and Delbecq. I have devised a schematic illustration of the technique.

(CHART VII HERE)

After receiving training in this technique, the advisory group members could spend several weeks conducting group meetings with members of the target group. For example, each of the 30 advisory group members conducting meetings with two groups of 25 constituents would reach 1500 people in the process. A collating of the responses would provide considerable knowledge of the perceived needs of that constituency. If those needs were then categorized into life role areas, the curriculum developers would have the raw material for translation into transactional competencies. In some cases, there would be overlapping in categorizations which would not pose serious problems, however. The important thing is that the derived competency be directly related to well-defined transactions and the transactions should be clearly related to the perceived needs of constituents. Over a two or three year period, the transactional competencies should be tested and revised with volunteer members of the target group. Their feedback would be invaluable.

I need not go further with the processes of implementation. Curriculum

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CHART~VII

A Schemata of the Nominal Group Process

FOCUS	STEPS	PROCEDURES	TIME
GENERATING IDEAS	SILENT BRAINSTORMING	MEMBERS RECORD THEIR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO QUESTION	15"
	IDEA RECORDING	ROUND-ROBIN LISTING ON FLIP CHARTS WITHOUT COMMENT	20"
	IDEA CLARIFICATION	DISCUSSION WITHOUT VALUE JUDGEMENTS FROM GROUP	20"
		COFFEE BREAK	10"
PRIORITY SETTING	RANKING IDEAS	MEMBERS USE 3x5 CARDS TO RANK THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS INDIVIDUALLY	15"
	RECORDING GROUP JUDGEMENTS	MEMBERS POST THEIR RANKINGS BY THEIR SELECTED ITEMS ON FLIP CHART	10"
	DISCUSSION	GROUP DISCUSSES AND DEFENDS RELATIVE MERITS OF VARIOUS IDEAS ON FLIP CHART	30"
	SCORING PERIOD	MEMBERS INDIVIDUALLY SCORE TOP TEN ITEMS ON 100 POINT SCALE AND TURN IN SCORES	10"

builders are quite familiar with them. In conclusion, I would say that it would be a most exciting experience to take interested community college faculty members through this curriculum building process. They themselves have unmet needs and they need help with transactional competencies. Just imagine, one might create a life-centered curriculum that would appeal to members of a community college faculty. People at all levels are hungry for education that will give meaning to the lives they are living. If that hunger is to be satisfied, it will be derived in a large part from teachers and role models who have found meaning in their own daily transactions.

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